

TEACHER TALK TIME IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Classroom interaction is described as a communication process between teacher and students that involves talk as a tool to achieve good communication. Talk is essential to students thinking and learning, and their productive engagement in classroom. This study will figure out TTT phenomenon. The aim of to the study is to explore kind of teacher talk used by English teachers and students' perception toward it. An English teacher and 33 junior high school students are the participants of the study. They are given a questionnaire that consist 15 statements. Observation and Interview are conducted to complete the data collection. The result shows that TTT is important in ELT classroom and students have positive positive perception toward it.

Keywords: *teacher talk time, student talk time, students' perception.*

INTRODUCTION

Teacher talk is defined as the language used by the teachers when they have interaction in L2 classroom interaction (Ur, 2000). It is believed as an important aspect in language learning as a mean of organization and management of the classroom and the processes of acquisition (Nunan, 1991). Hakansson (1986) stated that the effectiveness of teacher talk in a classroom has significant role in leading the successful learning process.

In traditional teacher-centred English class, most teachers generally just pass on the knowledge that makes efficient communication between teachers and students are rare. Nowadays, student-centred method and interaction teaching mode dominants class teaching and learning. Teachers are viewed as an important part of teaching environment in which teachers' utterances is the main sources of information, especially in English classroom in Indonesian context. The utterances are seen as the major

English input. In fact, appropriate forms of teacher talk can create an ideal English environment for students to learn and communicate in the target language, which will help students acquire a good language habit and linguistic competence (Anton, 1999).

Teacher talk time (TTT) within the EFL classroom has been critically evaluated in the process of endeavouring to increase students' L2 practice time (Willis, 1990; Paul, 2003). Much research on TTT has focused on its quantity (amount) and/or quality (effectiveness). These studies have provided new insights into the ways EFL teachers teach in the classroom. In Indonesia, teacher talk time study is still limited. The present study is going to be done in search of TTT phenomenon in Indonesian context. The aim of to the study is to explore kind of teacher talk used by English teachers and students' perception toward it.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Talk in the Classroom

Classroom interaction is described as a communication process between teacher and students that involves talk as a tool to achieve good communication. Talk is essential to students thinking and learning, and their productive engagement in classroom life. The major proportion of talk in the classroom is taken up by teacher talking in front of the classroom (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). No matter what teaching strategies or methods a teacher uses, it is necessary to give direction, explain activities and check student understanding. Improving the quality and quantity of classroom talk, or in other words teacher – students talk, is often seen as key to improve classroom learning (Eke & Lee, 2009). Talks that usually take place in the classroom can be summarized into pattern. Bantley (2007) cited in Majdina (2015, p. 9-10) classifies the general pattern of classroom talk as the following:

Pattern of Classroom Talk	
Teacher Talk	Student Talk
Instructing	Responding
Questioning	Questioning
Giving Opinions	Giving Opinions
Explaining	Reporting back
Eliciting	Asking for clarification
Checking	Collaborative talk
Correcting	Repeating language
Prompting	Reading aloud
Scaffolding	Socialising
Reading aloud	Comments to peer
Summarizing	
Giving feedback – praising	
Telling anecdotes	

Pattern of classroom talk

Based on explanation above, talks both from teachers and students influence

the effectiveness of the classroom interaction. Walsh (2011) cited in Behtash & Azarnia (2015, p. 274) claimed that teacher talk is more important in language classroom than any other classroom activities since in this context the language being used by teachers is not only the means of acquiring new knowledge but also the goal of the learning process.

Categories of Teacher Talk

Language that teacher uses in class, or “teacher talk,” can have a tremendous impact on the success of interactions they have with students (Weddel, 2008). The way teacher uses various talk to interact with students in the classroom is important in order to promote an effective teaching learning process. One way to analyse interaction in the classroom is by using terms of well-known taxonomy for describing classroom interaction such as teacher talk. Brown (2001) gave some categories for observation of classes known as the FLINT (Foreign Language Interaction) analysis model. Flander's Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) (1970) is the earliest observation system that is made to examine interaction in classroom. Flander provides ten categories to classify classroom verbal interaction into three groups: teacher talk (accept feeling, praises or encourage, accepts or uses ideas of students, asks question, lectures, gives direction, and criticizes or uses authority), student talk (response and initiation), and silence (period of silence or confusion). Meanwhile, Foreign Language Interaction (FLINT) system developed by Moskowitz is one of the guidelines to analyse interaction in classroom activities.

According to Moskowitz's FLINT (Foreign Language Interaction) systems in Brown (2001), teacher talk has eleven categories that can be analysed based on classroom interaction. The categories of

teacher talk are divided into two kinds of influence; indirect and direct influences. The FLINT system (Foreign Language Interaction) is developed to give objective feedback about classroom interaction to foreign language teachers, assesses nonverbal communications and the kinds and amount of student talk and teacher talk in the target and native languages as cited in Young (2014, p. 1). Based on the explanation above, FLINT system is used as an instrument to analyse and observe interaction between teacher and students in the classroom. Moskowitz made the Flanders system more clear and deepen by adding and devising some categories that would fit better to foreign language classroom analysis. In FLINT, it is stated that teaching will be effective depending on a large degree on how directly and indirectly teachers influence the students' behaviours. So, the researchers choose FLINT as an instrument to observe process classroom interaction.

Foreign Language Interaction (FLINT) System

Brown (2001) stated that FLINT model is helpful in developing interactive language teaching. There are several practical uses as the following: First, it gives taxonomy for observing other teacher. Moskowitz recommended using a chart or grid to note instances of each category to calculate how much time a teacher spends with each student. Then it can evaluate the wisdom of certain choice made by the teacher or look at the overall distribution of time. Second, it gives a framework for evaluating and improving teaching ability. For example, how well does the teacher balance his talk and student talk? While the FLINT model includes seven categories for teacher talk and only two for students talk, teacher should not dominate the class. Depending on the objective of the lesson, the level of the students, and other contextual factors,

the proportion will vary but most of the time teacher tends talk too much, not allowing enough time for student to respond or to initiate talk. A careful consideration of all seven of teacher talk categories can also serve as a blueprint for teaching behaviour in the classroom:

Am I accepting the students' feeling in a non-threatening way?

Am I offering sufficient praise?

Am I lecturing too much?

Do I give my student opportunities to initiate language on their own?

Third, the FLINT model, especially the first seven categories, helps to set a learning climate for interactive teaching. Teacher can establish a climate of cooperation by recognizing and openly accepting students' emotional up and down, by recognizing each individual student in the class as special in his or her own way, by soliciting their ideas, and by careful framing of question.

The following are seven categories of teacher talk according to FLINT system that are divided into two kinds of influence; indirect and direct influences. The indirect influence is an effect in which students are lead to the warm classroom atmosphere and try to break the ice in order to encourage them to participate and learn in classroom interaction. Categories of teacher talk which are included in this indirect influence are mentioned and described below. (Brown, 2001):

- 1) Deals with feelings: in a non-threatening way, accepting, discussing, referring to or communicating understanding of past, present or future feelings of students
- 2) Praises or encourages: praising, complimenting, telling students what they have said or done is valued, encouraging students to continue, trying to give them confidence, confirming that answers are correct. It

can be done through jokes. Jokes: intentional joking, kidding, making funs, attempting to be humorous, providing the joking is not at anyone's expense (unintentional humor is not included in this category).

- 3) Uses ideas of students: clarifying, using, interpreting, and summarizing the ideas of students. The ideas must be rephrased by the teacher but still be recognized as being student contributions. It can be done through repeats student response verbatim: Repeating the exact words of students after they participate.
- 4) Asks questions: Asking questions to which the answer is anticipated (rhetorical questions are not included in this category).

Another influence in the teacher talk is direct influence. The direct influence is aim to encourage students to involve directly in the teaching and learning activity. The features are described as follows.

- 5) Gives information/Corrects without rejection: telling students who have made a mistake the correct response without using words or intonations which communicate criticism.
- 6) Gives directions: giving directions, requests or commands that students are expected to follow; directing various drills; facilitating whole class and small group activity.
- 7) Criticizes student behavior: rejecting the behavior of students, trying to change the non-acceptable behavior, communicating anger, displeasure, annoyance, dissatisfaction with what students are doing. It can be done through criticizing student response: telling the student his or her response is not correct or acceptable and communicating criticism, displeasure,

annoyance, rejection by words or intonation.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that using FLINT system gives some advantages for the teachers to evaluate and improve their teaching behavior such as use more praises, clarify what the students say, asks questions, giving directions, etc. at the classroom.

Students' Perception

Rao and Narayan (1998) state that "perception is the process whereby people select, organise, and interpret sensory stimulations into meaningful information about their work environment" in order to receive information from environment needed sense organs like eye, ear and nose (as cited in Unumeri, 2009 p. 18). In other words, the same set of information that other people have on a particular situation, person or group will cause individual differences in the capacity to interpret the information that they have.

Students' perception according to McGoldrick and Caffrey (2009, cited in Yulianti, 2013, p. 25) can be understood as the students' ability to justify their own opinions and distinguish it from research being presented in the class. Students' perception towards teacher knowledge of subject matter, attitudes to work and teaching skill is absolutely dependent on the fact that they have been taught by the teacher under evaluation and familiar with them. They, therefore, have minds already pre-occupied with memories and reactions that inventory for data collection will measure (Allport, 1976 cited in Iswan, 2015 p. 3).

Based explanation above, it can be concluded that perception is a process in which every individual respond, understand or want to understand about certain object after receiving the stimulants from environment. Then, the

stimulant is interpreted in order to select the experience and decide what action would be taken. In this research, the term individual refers to the students and perception is a process of the students toward teacher talk which is used by English teacher.

METHOD

The study is conducted to reveals teacher talk used by the teacher and students' perception towards teacher talk that occurred in English classroom. The perception itself needs to be presented comprehensively in order to get thorough explanations of the real condition. According to Yorkshire & the Humber (2007) cited in Hancock, et al. (2009, p. 4) qualitative research attempts to broaden and/or deepen our understanding of how things came to be the way they are in our social world. For this reason, the researcher applies descriptive qualitative study as the research design.

The participants of this research are an English teacher and 33 students of VIIIth grade at SMPN 8 Bogor. They are given different treatment to collect the data. For the teacher, he is interviewed and observed while the students are given a questionnaire adopted and developed from Asmara (2007) about the students' perception towards teacher talk in English class. The questionnaire consists of fifteen statements with the alternative choices as stated on the likert scale such as 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Neutral', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'.

In the observation, the researcher observed teacher talk that teacher used during teaching learning process. The researcher used systematic observation to collect the data about categories of teacher talk used by English teacher during the teaching learning process. The researcher used observation sheet adapted from FLINT (Foreign Language Interaction) system from Moskowitz (1971, 1976 cited in Brown 2001). The

observation sheet is divided into two kinds of influences; indirect influence and direct influence in order to observe the frequency of teacher talk used by English teacher during teaching learning process (see appendix 1). Interview is done to get clearer understanding of the doubts gathered during observation. Data gathered from questionnaire is analysed based on percentage, and observation and interview data are analysed descriptively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following is the result from observation sheet:

Teacher's Talk Categories		Frequency	Percentage
TEACHER TALK	INDIRECT INFLUENCE	1. Deal with feelings	2 3%
		2. Praises and encourage	22 35%
		- Jokes	- 0%
		3. Uses ideas of students	1 2%
		- Repeat student response verbatim	9 14%
	DIRECT INFLUENCE	4. Asks questions	18 29%
		5. Gives information	2 3%
		- Correct without rejection	2 3%
		6. Gives direction	4 5%
		7. Criticizes student behaviour	3 6%
- Criticizes student response	- 0%		
Total		63	100%

Teacher Talk Categories based on FLINT system

Based on the observation finding above, it is found that almost of categories in teacher talk as mentioned in FLINT system have been applied by the teacher. In total, there are total 63 times talks that cover more indirect influence (83%) rather than direct influence (17%).

From questionnaire given (appendix 1), it is derived that students have positive feedback about the condition of classroom interaction. Students said that the class is fun and enjoyable because the teacher often gives encouragement to the students to be actively involved in learning process. In addition, it is also revealed that students feel comfortable when the teacher gives direction because it is clear, precise and effective. However, students said that they are not in favour of getting a lot of questions during the learning process.

Based on the observation sheet adapted from FLINT system (Brown, 2001, p. 170), it can be seen that indirect influence is most frequent than direct influence. This is indicated by the teacher most frequent used of teacher talk by doing praises or encourage (35%) and asking question (29%). Meanwhile, the teacher didn't used teacher talk for categories jokes and criticizes student response. It means that the teacher tried to make the students lead to the warm classroom atmosphere and encourage them to participate and learn in classroom interaction. It is supported by Radford (2011) cited in Almira (2016, p. 9) that through the classroom interaction, the learning process among students will occur since they will exchange their knowledge or understanding from each other.

The teacher knows how to make students involve in classroom interaction through teaching style. It is supported by Creemers and Kyriakides (2007, as cited in Nurhasanah, 2013) statement that classroom interaction is really related to the teacher's style. Therefore, the

students can enjoy and are interested in learning English class with their English teacher. Furthermore, from questionnaire finding based on teacher talk categories in FLINT system, it is found that the most of the students feel comfortable when the teacher gives direction because the way teacher gives direction were clear, precise and effective. This is supported by Richard & Schimdt statement that (1985 cited in Behtash & Azarnia, 2015, p. 274) teacher talk in the classroom used by the teacher no matter what teaching strategies or methods a teacher uses, it is necessary to give directions and explain the activities.

However, the researcher found that teacher talk related to asking question category is less in favour in the eyes of the students. It means that not all students are ready to be asked by the teacher. It can be caused by the lack of students' confidence in speaking in English or they have less vocabulary and grammar. According to Jia (2013, p. 210) the teacher should choose the types of teacher' question according to the different proficiency level of learners (beginner, intermediate and advanced). So, teacher talk for category encourage needed in order to make students more confident to speak in English. Furthermore based on research findings above, it is found that there are some differences findings between observation and questionnaire findings. Based on the observation finding, it is found that kinds of teacher talk related to indirect influence is the most frequent used by the teacher than direct influence. Meanwhile, based on questionnaire finding, it is found that the students feel more comfortable when the teacher used kinds of teacher talk related to direct influence. Therefore, the teacher tried to be well prepared by giving positive and innovative classroom activities in order to manage students' participate actively in the classroom. To sum, it can be

concluded that teacher talk is important for the teacher in English class. Walsh (2011) cited in Behtash & Azarnia (2015, p. 274) claimed that teacher talk is more important in language classroom than any other classroom since in this context the language being used by teacher is not only the means of acquiring new knowledge but also the goal of the learning process. The teacher also tried to understand what languages would be more efficient in creating an environment in which students feel more comfortable and more confident and become more involved in interactive activities in the English class.

CONCLUSION

The English teachers are recommended to develop and improve their basic ability in managing their talks, especially in giving encouragement to students in English class. The teachers also should try to understand what languages would be more efficient in creating an environment in which students feel more comfortable and more confident. This will make students more involved in interactive activities in the English class. In addition, teachers must also be a good facilitator and motivator to the students in learning English.

In this research the researchers realized that the design of study is very simple. There are many weaknesses that could be seen. Therefore, further research is expected that other researcher can improve this study with better design and different object to support the result finding. In other words, other researchers can use this study as the reference for conducting their research.

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